

## Message Text

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DEPT FOR ARA AND S/NM, AID FOR SER/INC

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TAGS: SNAR CO

SUBJ: NARCOTICS CONTROL: GOC TIGHTENS PORT SECURITY PROCEDURES

SUMMARY: OVER PAST THREE WEEKS NARCOR AND DEA AGENTS HAVE VISITED ALL MAJOR COLOMBIAN PORTS TO REVIEW TIGHTER SECURITY PROCEDURES IMPOSED BY NEWLY CREATED PORT POLICE UNITS. THEFTS AND PILFERAGE ARE REDUCED BY 80 TO 90 PERCENT IN ALL FOUR MAJOR PORTS COVERED INDICATING PORT ACCESS STRICTLY CONTROLLED. THOUGH PORT POLICE UNITS ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY TARGETED AT DRUG TRAFFIC, EFFORTS IN THIS VITAL AREA ALSO SLOW MAKRED IMPROVEMENT.

1. BEGINNING IN JULY 1975, GOC INSTALLED SPECIALLY-TRAINED NATIONAL POLICE PORT POLICE UNITS IN THE FOUR MAJOR COLOMBIAN GENERAL CARGO PORTS: BUENAVENTURA, SANTA MARTA, CARTAGENA AND BARRANQUILLA. THE COST OF TRAINING AND MAINTAINING THESE USINTS--RANGING IN SIZE FROM NEARLY 300 AT BUENAVENTURA AND BARRANQUILLA TO ONLY 180 MEN AT CARTAGENA--IS BEING BORNE ENTIRELY BY THE GOC PORT AUTHORITY (COLPUERTOS), AN ANTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT CORPORATION. IN ORDER TO REDUCE CORRUPT PRACTICES, POLICE AGENTS ASSIGNED TO THE FOUR UNITS ARE EXCLUSIVELY NEW RECRUITS AVERAGING ABOUT 19 YEARS OF AGE. THEY RECEIVE NORMAL POLICE BASIC TRAINING PRIOR TO MOVING ON TO SPECIALIZED PORT SECURITY TRAINING AT A MOCK  
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FACILITY CONSTRUCTED BY COLPUERTOS IN ARAUCA DEPARTMENT.

AFTER THREE MONTHS OF COURSE WORK DIRECTED BY POLICE AND COLPUERTOS INSTRUCTORS, RECRUITS ARE ASSIGNED TO SIX-MONTH STINTS AS PORT POLICE INSPECTORS. FOLLOWING THIS SIX-MONTH TOUR, AGENTS ARE ROTATED TO OTHER POLICE DUTIES AND REPLACED BY NEWLY-TRAINED AGENTS.

2. ACCORDING TO THE CARTAGENA PORT DIRECTOR, COLPUERTOS HAS ALREADY EXPENDED OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS ON THIS PROJECT. THE DIRECTORS CONSIDERED THIS MONEY WELL SPENT IN VIEW OF PREVIOUS SERIOUS LOSSES THROUGH PILFERAGE AND THE REFUSAL OF SOME UNDERWRITERS TO APPROVE GENERAL CARGO INSURANCE FOR GOODS BEING SHIPPED TO OR THROUGH COLOMBIAN SEA PORTS. THE SAME SOURCE REPORTED THAT LOSSES IN ALL FOUR PORTS COVERED UNDER THE PORT POLICE SCHEME HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY FROM 80 TO 90 PERCENT SINCE JULY. THIS ESTIMATE IS CONFIRMED BY GOC CUSTOMS AND BY GRANCOLOMBIA LINES EXECUTIVES.

3. THROUGH PORT POLICE UNITS ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY TRAINED FOR NOR TARGETED AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, THEY ARE APPARENTLY WELL QUALIFIED FOR GENERAL SEARCH AND SEIZURE OPERATIONS. VEHICLES AND PERSONS ENTERING AND LEAVING PORT FACILITIES ARE SEARCHED, AND PORT POLICE PATROLS OPERATE 24-HOURS PER DAY WITHIN PORT AREAS. MOREOVER, THESE UNITS ARE ASSIGNED POLICE DOGS TRAINED IN SNIFFING OUT MARIJUANA. ONE RECENT INSTANCE OF PORT POLICE SUCCESS IN NARCOTICS INTERDICTION CAME LAST MONTH AT SANTA MARTA PORT, WHERE AGENTS CONFISCATED A CACHE OF 17 KILOS OF MARIJUANA AND 21 KILOS OF COCAINE. A SUBSEQUENT F-2 INVESTIGATION NEEDED 5 SUSPECTS, WHO ARE NOT AWAITING TRIAL.

4. THOUGH THE PORT POLICE SYSTEM IS PROVING SUCCESSFUL, IT STILL HAS LOOPHOLES. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE US-OWNED PRUDENTIAL LINES, FOR INSTANCES, REPORT CONTINUED SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH STOWAWAYS BOARDING THEIR SHIPS AT BUENAVENTURA PORT. MORE SERIOUS IS THE FACT THAT PORT POLICE UNITS COVER ONLY COLPUERTOS INSTALLATIONS. NEIGHBORING FACILITIES USED FOR COASTAL TRAFFIC OR FOR FISHING CRAFT ARE NOT RPT NOT COVERED. YACHT BASINS AND ACHORAGES ARE SIMILARLY UNPATROLLED BY EITHER CUSTOMS OR THE PORT POLICE. FINALLY, THE SMALLER COLOMBIAN PORTS SUCH AS SAN ANDRES AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TURBO ARE NOT COVERED BY PORT POLICE AT ALL. THESE LATTER PORTS--PARTICULARLY THE BANANA PORT AT TURBO--ARE HOTBEDS OF DRUG TRAFFIC AIMED AT THE US.

5. IN SUM, HOWEVER, PORT POLICE SECURITY MEASURES ARE A NET PLUS IN GOC NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORTS, PARTICULARLY AS THESE APPLY TO TRAFFICKING ABOARD GRANCOLOMBIANA VESSELS.  
VAKY

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